



Catoosa County MSWL

August 24, 2001

Introduction

Under normal operations, leachate from the Catoosa County Municipal Solid Waste Landfill facility is pumped and hauled to a wastewater treatment plant. In December 1998 and in July 1999, employees released the leachate into a wet-weather conveyance. Community members and employees asked whether groundwater and private well water could be impacted because of those releases.

Site Description and History

The Catoosa Municipal Solid Waste Landfill is approximately 700 feet south of the intersection of Poplar Springs Road and Baggett Road, 4 miles southwest of Ringgold, Georgia. Development of the immediate vicinity of the landfill is primarily residential. The undeveloped areas are used for agricultural purposes or are wooded. Access to the site is from the existing landfill by Shope Ridge Road.

The Catoosa County Public Utilities and Solid Waste Management Authority has an agreement to pump and haul leachate from the landfill area known as the Site No. 2 facility to the wastewater treatment plant operated by the city of Ringgold, Georgia. They also have an agreement with the city of Chattanooga to pump and haul leachate to Moccasin Bend Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Environmental Sampling/Results

In December 1998, employees released an estimated 230,400 gallons of leachate during a time period of 48 hours because of operational difficulties. According to landfill personnel, the water released had no odor or color, and the fluid appeared to be primarily storm water.

The same release procedure was used again in July 1999. An estimated 83,333 gallons of leachate were released into the wet-weather conveyance over approximately 11 hours.

Two weeks before the July 1999 release, the leachate was sampled and cadmium and thallium were reported present at levels above the maximum contaminant level for drinking water. However, leachate is not a source of drinking water and is usually contained and treated.

Although existing groundwater data are limited, the releases at the landfill likely did not impact area groundwater and private drinking water wells. The releases were to a surface ditch and occurred during times of heavy rainfall when any contaminants present in the leachate would be diluted and dispersed over a large area. The leachate releases would not be expected to impact private well water or increase levels of contaminants in groundwater at the site.

Conclusions

The leachate releases would not be expected to impact private well water or increase levels of cadmium and thallium in groundwater at the site. The releases are ***no public health hazard***.

Recommendations

In agreement with the Georgia Environmental Protection Division, GDEH recommends groundwater and drinking water sampling in the event of a future reported leachate release from the Catoosa County Municipal Landfill. No further public health actions are indicated at this time.